North Bi Northwest

The Newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network,
a member project of Gay Community Social Services

August/September 1991 Volume 4, Number 4

Bi Net: Bisexual network out and loud!

Twenty-two years after the modern lesbian-gay movement began, a United States network for bisexual people has been organized. Bi-Net—The Bisexual Network of the USA (formerly the North American Multicultural Bisexual Network)—held its second annual conference July 13-14 in Seattle to continue the work begun the year before at the first National Bisexual Conference in San Francisco, which was attended by more than 450 people from all over the world.

At the Seattle conference, 50 organizers representing at least 26 groups from throughout the United States developed several work groups, a quarterly newsletter, and strategies and procedures for working with people in various communities—particularly racial, sexual, and other oppressed minorities, those in non- urban areas, etc.

Among the decisions made:

—The name of the network, which has informally existed for about five years, was changed to reflect the fact that Hawai'i is not necessarily seen as part of North America, while Mexico and Canada have not been represented or were under represented (no representatives from Canada or Mexico attended the conference in Seattle). "Multicultural" was removed from the name because it is part of the general statement of purpose agreed upon at the previous conference and because its inclusion in the name was seen by some as excluding concerns of other oppressed groups.

—The network mailing address will continue to be 584 Castro St. #441, San Francisco, CA 94114-2588.

—For the next two years, the East Coast Bisexual Network will continue to produce the *International Directory of Bisexual Groups*. The directory is published every October and April, and is currently 24 pages long and contains approximately 150 groups. BiNet will assume responsibility for producing the directory by the end of that time.

—A quarterly newsletter will be published in the middle of February, May, August, and November, containing group and network news, upcoming bi events, tips on organizing, and listings of various print/video/audio/etc. resources. A newsletter work group was created.

—A task force was created to find a sponsoring group and location for next year's conference.

—A National Task Force on Bisexuals and HIV was also created.

—BiNet endorsed and will promote bi visibility and participation in the annual gay/lesbian national Coming Out Day, October 11.

The network will also promote the organizing at local levels of a Bisexual Visibility Day ("Bi Out Day") to be held February 14, 1992, Valentine's Day.

The conference was organized by members of the Seattle Bisexual Men's Union and the Bay Area Bisexual Network and held at the Pilgrim Congregational Church, and included a fundraiser dance for BiNet and SBWN.

The Network is a non-partisan

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North Bi Northwest

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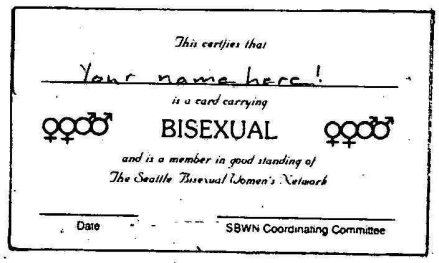

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SBWN Statement of Purpose

We are a group of feminists working to create a bisexual support network and to promote equality for bisexual people in both the heterosexual and lesbian/gay communities. We regard ourselves as part of the larger sexual minority community, and consider the fight for lesbian/gay rights to be our own. We are dedicated to the right of all people to define their own sexuality, free from any social, political or economic coercion. We seek to provide a safe place for women to explore all aspects of their sexuality. All women are welcome to attend SBWN activities. While we work with men on issues of common interest, our group is exclusively female to keep the concerns of women in the forefront of our work.

The discrimination we face as women and as sexual minorities is only one facet of oppression: all bigotry is our enemy. We stand behind the racial and ethnic liberation movements and the struggle for economic equality. However, in any work we do, feminism and the interests of women will be our central concern.

Calendar

Please note: topics are tentative. Call the bi-phone at 783-7987 to check.

August 2 Mass viewing of the Rocky Horror Picture Show. Call the Bi-Phone for details

August 4 Support/check in meeting 6:00pm

August 10 Polyfi Potluck 7:00 at the LRC, call 322-DYKE

August 12 Newcomers Group 7:15pm.

August 18 Topic Night: **Intimacy** 6:00

August 26 Newcomers Group 7:15pm

September 1 Support/check-in meeting 6:00pm.

September 9 Newcomers group 7:15pm.

September 15 Topic Night: **Dealing with Homphobia, sexist remarks and the like**

September 20 Newsletter folding, with dancing afterwards 7:00

September 23 Newcomers Group 7:15.

September 29 Support/check-in meeting 6:00pm.

October 7 Newcomers Group 7:15pm

October 12 Polyfi Potluck at the LRC 7:00

October 13 Topic Night: **Body Image** 6:00

October 21 Newcomers Group 7:15 pm

October 27 Support/Check in meeting 6:00

Encounters with lesbians

An encounter with Jill Johnson

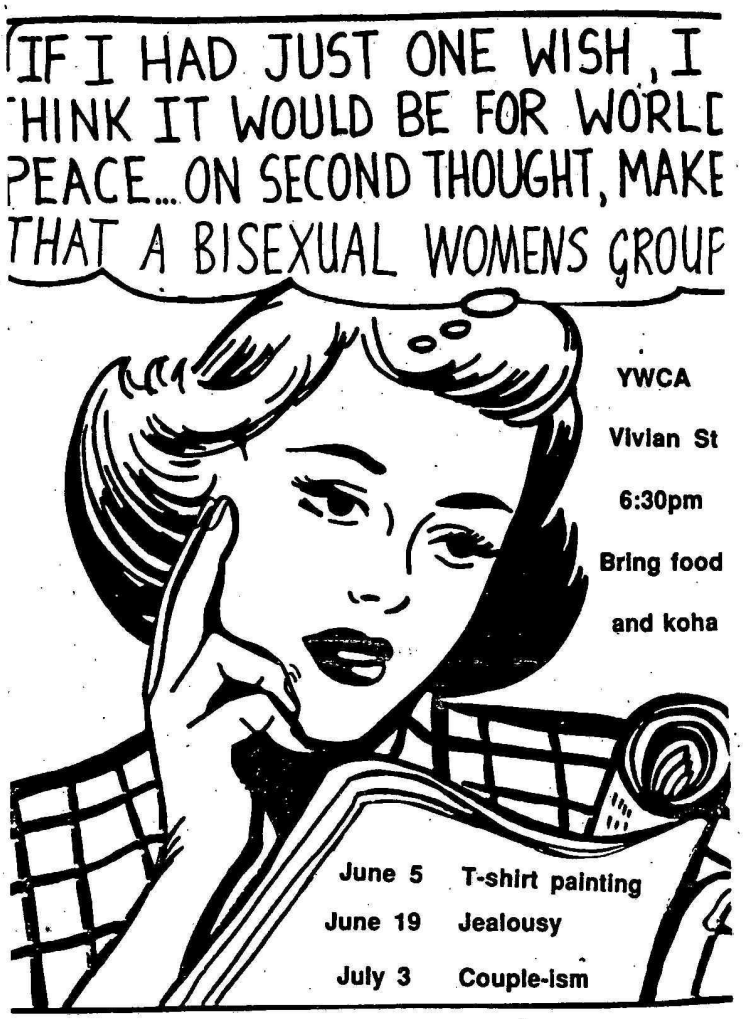
by Barbara Gibson

My personal encounter with the well-known Lesbian writer Jill Johnston in 1973 (documented from her perspective in the book *Gullible's Travels*) introduced a confrontation with Lesbian separatism into my life most poignantly. Because I had admired her column in the *Village Voice*, and early chapters of her book Lesbian Nation, I invited her to speak and meet with women students at the small alternative college where I taught women's studies and writing. Before her visit, Jill and I exchanged several letters, in which I confessed my confusion and ambiguity about my sexual orientation (living with a young male lover, but calling myself a Lesbian, for good "political" reasons). I told her that I looked forward to talking about these issues with her at greater length. I was intrigued by her statement "Scratch a feminist and you'll find a Lesbian." (Or as another feminist of that era, Ti-Grace Atkinson, put it, "Feminism is the theory, and esbianism is the practice.")* I wondered if I was just straddling the fence, being a coward. Was I supposed to come out once and for all and live the rest of my life with women? Perhaps I secretly hoped that Jill would provide magic solutions to these unanswerable questions.

When Jill arrived in town, a complicated and subtle attraction began to develop between us, which was mutual but not acknowledged directly. At first she refused to stay at my house, because, she said, "I don't want to be in the position of getting into an intense conversation with someone and then have her go off to bed with a man." So I arranged for her to stay with a Lesbian couple, but when a sudden snowstorm made it inconvenient for her to go there, she agreed to stay with me, and indeed the very situation she had feared took place. She and I talked late into the night, and when it was time for bed, I asked her if she wanted me to sleep with her, or in the same room, or...or what. She looked at me and did not reply, so I went off to my room where my male partner was asleep. Other ambiguous situations arose between us, in which I essentially made myself vulnerable, and she remained enigmatic and in control.

By the end of her time in Michigan, I felt manipulated, used, and ultimately rejected, essentially because of my bisexuality. I felt disillusioned about Lesbianism and relationships with women in general because of the painful interactions I had with Jill, which she recounted in her column in the *Village Voice*, where she made me look like a fool, at best, and a traitor to feminism at worst. Much of this disaster was due to my own naivete, some perhaps to Jill's own cynicism or defensiveness, but much was due to the confusion that both of us felt about feminism, separatism, and sex, a confusion that grew out of the politics of the women's movement at that time, the politics of Lesbian separatism.

*Editor's note. Atkinson's actual quote was "Feminism is a theory, lesbianism is a practice." However, the version Gibson gives is the one everyone uses.



What they're up to in New Zealand. Contact the Wellington Bisexual Women's Group at PO Box 5145, Wellington, NZ. Now if we just knew what koha was.

Encounters with lesbians

What they're saying about us at 28 Barbary Lane

The following is part of an ongoing conversation between women about bisexuality taking place on 28 Barbary Lane, a Seattle-based computer bulletin board. The ... ... indicates where text has been cut, with the permission of the authors.

From: Presumed Innocent 668

I get very irritated at litmus tests that tend to divide, rather than look for common goals. We could spend hours, months and years looking for that which divides us. After all some of us are lipstick lesbians, others are butches. Some us are bottoms, others tops. Some of us are blonde, others brunettes and redheads. But then we have to look at the real world and discover what a minority we really are. Even gay men (right on this board and in this community) outnumber us and are able to have their way to our disadvantage.

In the words of one of the greatest women's songwriters, Judy Fjell, "a long time ago, I stopped looking at people's bodies and started talking to the spirit within." Whether we are lesbians or bisexual is not really important. What is important is that we fight for that which is common to us all. We are all oppressed as women first and for our sexual "disorientation" second. We have enough sources of distress in the overall world without creating more amongst ourselves. I place more validity on the comments of a bisexual woman about lesbians than I would from even the most sensitive of men. Sure there are some people in the lesbian community with whom I differ greatly, but I will fight for anyone's right to express their opinion, whether I agree or not.

From: SUE 822

I don't understand. You say that [all] lesbians have to be politically correct? I disagree! I usually disagree with most "lesbian" politics. I might never say out loud what I think "politically", but that does not mean that I have no opinion, or that I agree completely. Usually to say something means that I get a totally biased opinion from someone else, trying to change my mind. Not all lesbians are, or want to be, politically correct. I especially do not. I know that I am different from [maybe] most lesbians but I usually don't care whether some right wing male wins the presidential election or if a left winger male or female wins.

I identify myself as Gay, Lesbian, Dyke, etc. This does not mean that I hate men. What it does mean, to me, is that I am most interested in women. I have many male friends and almost as many female friends. I am sexually attracted only to women but men have a place in my life too.

Bi-sexual women are [I think] sexually attracted to both men and women. This does not make them unaware of women's attributes, but it does make them aware of all people, male or female.

I'm not trying to attack, I'm sorry if it sounds that way, but what I'm trying to say is that everyone is different. If we weren't then we would all be perfect and never make mistakes. In my fantasy life, all women are cuddly, warm, good kissers, and all those other things. Life doesn't work out that way very often, but there is always hope for the future.

From: Elle 996

It never ceases to amaze me that in a community that has fought for so long to eradicate stereotypes and labels, we (read: lesbians and gays) still place so much emphasis on them. For example, the time I was told that I "just don't look and dress like a lesbian" (too femme). Well, having been both bi and eventually lesbian (and an eternal opponent of the politically correct), it's still nice to know that both my lesbian and bi friends feel comfortable enough in my home to come together for a dinner and movie night.

I don't place any inherent value in a women's sexual preference (my dearest girlfriend is as straight as they come) but I do oppose the rejection of anyone because of that same preference. Succinctly, having tried both genders, I'll take another woman every time (even if she doesn't necessarily meet all of the politically correct notions). That's not to say I hate men ... I simply prefer other women. Women together, lesbian or bi, without any games on either side, would be my ideal ... hopefully yours as well.

From: Lizbeth 228

I doubt you'll find a bisexual woman who will expect you to believe that she feels she is entirely lesbian. You're right: bisexual women and lesbian women are not the same. We are, however, similar. But once you get past the one obvious thing that we have in common, women, it's important that we regard each other as individuals. This is true of everybody you interact with. Nobody is a true stereotype.

You'll find lesbians who are sweet, sensitive, understanding, and ones who would just as rather have sex and leave never to see you again. Here are bisexual women who are looking for a permanent female partner but want to be honest and so therefore label themselves as bisexual rather than lesbian. You'll find lesbians who don't want to have anything to do with men, and lesbians who don't mind having occasional sex with men. You'll find bisexual women who never come out to their friends and family, and some who go through all the trauma of coming out just as many lesbians and gay men do. Bisexual is a gay label.

Most people think of bisexuality as "half and half". For me, it's being "twice as much"... I'm not just half-attracted to women. I'm fully attracted to women just as lesbians are.

It's at this point that I need to admit to you that, in most cases, I prefer women over men. ("There it is," they think, "she's just like the rest of them.") What I prefer most of all is NOT the wrapping, but what's inside. Women fit those criteria more often, is all.

From: Ann Yo!Rel 1294

(Disclaimer: I am presenting this information about me NOT because I expect your praise and adulation, but because I want to make a point about the shades of gray which must surround suspicions about bi women...)

I refuse to get married to my male partner (despite the monetary and familial advantages) because gay and lesbian couples can't get married, and therefore I couldn't get married if he were she. (There are other factors, such as the historical position of women within marriage and the blocks to an open relationship such a ceremony would pose for me, but the first reason is the primary one.)

I also make a concerted effort not to engage in public display of affection with opposite sex partners because I don't want to reinforce the mainstream assumption that everyone is heterosexual. I will be public with another woman.

A couple of ways I approach being bi. A couple of reasons I tend to get a little jumpy when blanket assumptions about bi's opting out for the easy way when the going gets rough. Just wanted to add a little more to the picture.

From: Diana Gard

...There is this sense that if someone takes a label that says I have more than one option, than somehow I'm thinking that means that there isn't a strong commitment to either. I also have this prejudice when people talk about open relationships. I just write them off as being uninterested in intimacy. Maybe I'm missing the boat here. I'm going to start reminding myself that a bi-sexual woman can and most probably does love women as much as I do, and if that's the case, then we are not just sisters because we are both women, but because we have a heart connection that means everything to me. I appreciate this enlightenment.

From: FAYGELETTE 666

.... I'm not sure HOW I feel about bisexuals in a Gay & Lesbian chorus, but it certainly wouldn't bother me as much as someone bisexual giving speeches or writing about "being gay" (as opposed to talking or writing about their experience of loving the same gender and being oppressed for it.

As far as dating a bisexual woman ... well ... alright, you got me, I WOULD think twice and, honestly, I probably wouldn't want to date her if it seemed she REALLY WAS interested in MEN, too. I've gotten quite heartsick in the (distant) past over women who were, or at least appeared to be, straight, and the thought of losing a LOVER to a MAN is too painful and incomprehensible for ME to expose myself to that possibility. (Guess I just lost my brownie points there.)

You mention that there are "bisexual women who are looking for a permanent female partner—this is interesting—I've NEVER met a bisexual woman who didn't either have a fairly permanent MAN in her life or who was interested in ONLY dating WOMEN ... except one or two who were self-admittedly crossing the line into LESBIAN identification.

...This really shouldn't be a debate over who is more oppressed or who rejected who first. I think we have finally agreed, though, that we are NOT the same and that many lesbians do not like having their identity merged with bisexual women's. I also think we are coming to understand that some bisexual women feel that they share a tremendous amount with lesbians—in our mutual oppression by a bigoted society and in our strong emotional and physical feelings for other women, and some bisexual women may even share a political and emotional commitment to lesbians that would please and relieve many of us. (Ann—I think you are thinking and acting admirably and bravely!)

Now, can bisexual women understand why GAY women sometimes feel more comfortable in strictly gay company, why we may choose to be friends with, but not date, bisexual women, and why, after having to listen to family, co-workers, and the whole, fucking WORLD talk about their boyfriends and husbands, we really don't want to have to hear about YOURS, TOO, when we get together in a presumably all-lesbian group?!

From: Diana Gard

Well, here's my reason [why I'm a lesbian]. I've spent my whole life (get out your violins, ladies), feeling like I didn't belong, and not being altogether sure for at least 20 of those years why. When I discovered why and discovered there was a community of people that would actually accept me, I jumped in. I think perhaps this is a dangerous way to be, it does end up copping to pigeon-holes, etc., but gosh, it sure is nice. It's quite a thing to say, travel to another state and go to a women's festival and be met with open arms, just because I'm a lesbian. I find

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Encounters with lesbians

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that worth the rejection that happens elsewhere, because now, at least I get the other side, too.

Another part of it is finding that I'm suddenly attractive. I never was in the het world. Never got asked to dance, etc, now I'm just the cutest thing on Earth and damn, I really like that. I deserve it and I'm willing to use a label to get it. I know that I'm a good person, a great friend, etc, so I don't think I'm hiding my crap behind the label. Well, enough excuses. It seems to me, a lot of what this discussion is about is bi-sexual women having the same desire to be welcomed warmly into a group of people that think and love like they do. Whether we like it or not, it is a human desire. Some might call it immature and base, I don't, I call it community.

From: Shaidar 1273

... Here is what I think. A lesbian is a woman who receives, or wants to receive her primary emotional, spiritual, and physical needs met by another woman. The word primary is important in this definition. It gives lee way for variation. For instance if a woman's primary physical focus is for another woman, but on occasion if she has sex with a man, she is still by this definition a lesbian. If her primary physical focus is with men, but her other needs are met by women, I would say she is bi-sexual. Anyway, thanks for making me think about this...

From: Night Owl 1313

I agree that bi's have a vested interest in securing gay rights (and social acceptance) and that you do face rejection from bigoted straights as do gays. I'm not sure that bi's have AS strong an interest or face as MUCH rejection, but I don't think we need to argue about who is more oppressed—that is not the issue nor is it productive.

As for your question about why "so many strictly Gay men and lesbians seem so eager to accuse us of 'not paying our dues or treat us in precisely the same manner that bigots treat them", perhaps it is because so many bisexuals "pass" in straight society (i.e. have opposite-gender girlfriends/boyfriends or even more "acceptable", have wives/husbands) and therefore, do not face the psychological pressures of hiding vs "coming out" that gays face at work and amongst friends and family. When you are out in public with your wife, you do not have to censor yourself from making an affectionate gesture or worry about how you will introduce her to someone. Many bi's did not struggle with the revulsion and hatred shown toward young people who could not "fit in" and "act straight" and date peers of the opposite gender. Bi's can choose when, and if, to "come out" because the questions simply don't come up; most of us gays face the questions at work, in financial matters (try explaining to your insurance agent that you want joint renter's insurance with your "roommate" of eight years), even with strangers ("yes, the room is for two women, no, we would NOT like twin beds, a queen-size bed will be just fine").

Worrying about whether a bisexual lover will leave us for a "het" relationship, resenting the fact that bisexuals can, and often DO, "pass" in straight society, feeling that bisexuals only "visit" the gay world (and have little true understanding of it or commitment to it)—I think these are legitimate emotions and are NOT the same as the sexist, homophobic reactions that straight bigots have toward gays.

Now I have a question, why do some politically-aware Bisexuals feel the need to "prove" that they are just as "queer" as gays and therefore should be, not just accepted but, WELCOMED into EVERY part of gay life as if there were NO DIFFERENCES between us? Recognizing and admitting our differences as well as our similarities is NOT intolerance.

From: Clitzpah 958

I write as a formerly biphobic lesbian who has gotten some pretty serious and positive enlightenment from bisexual women who I've known and loved. On my first date with Robyn, whom I now refer to as "Ms. Bisexual of Boston" (she's very political and out about herself) I said that I wouldn't want to go out with a bi woman because she might leave me for a man. I'd had that experience with someone who "just couldn't deal with our relationship until she worked things out with (her man)." So Robyn said, matter-of-factly, what's the difference between leaving you for a man or for a woman? I couldn't argue with it. And I met a lot of her bisexual friends who were everywhere on the spectrum in terms of what bisexual meant to them, but were all primarily supportive of and in the community of women. I realized that my biggest hangup was that I could never FATHOM having sex with a man. And I discovered that my disgust with men and their bodies was my own issue ... if a woman felt comfortable with being sexual with a man it was not my business to judge it. There's also the issue of whether or not a woman involved with a man will take her energy away from the women's community. In some cases, sure, but what seemed to be harder for the women I knew in Boston was, when they wanted to go to women's events and couldn't have their lover with them.

They often felt split in two and if there's one thing I think we can state unequivocally, it's that bisexuals are ostracized from both the straight and gay communities. I, for one, don't think lesbians can say what bisexuality is about any more than a straight person can say what being gay is all about. It's for those who have experienced it to describe (and, hopefully, not constantly have to defend). I still have my prejudices and biases but

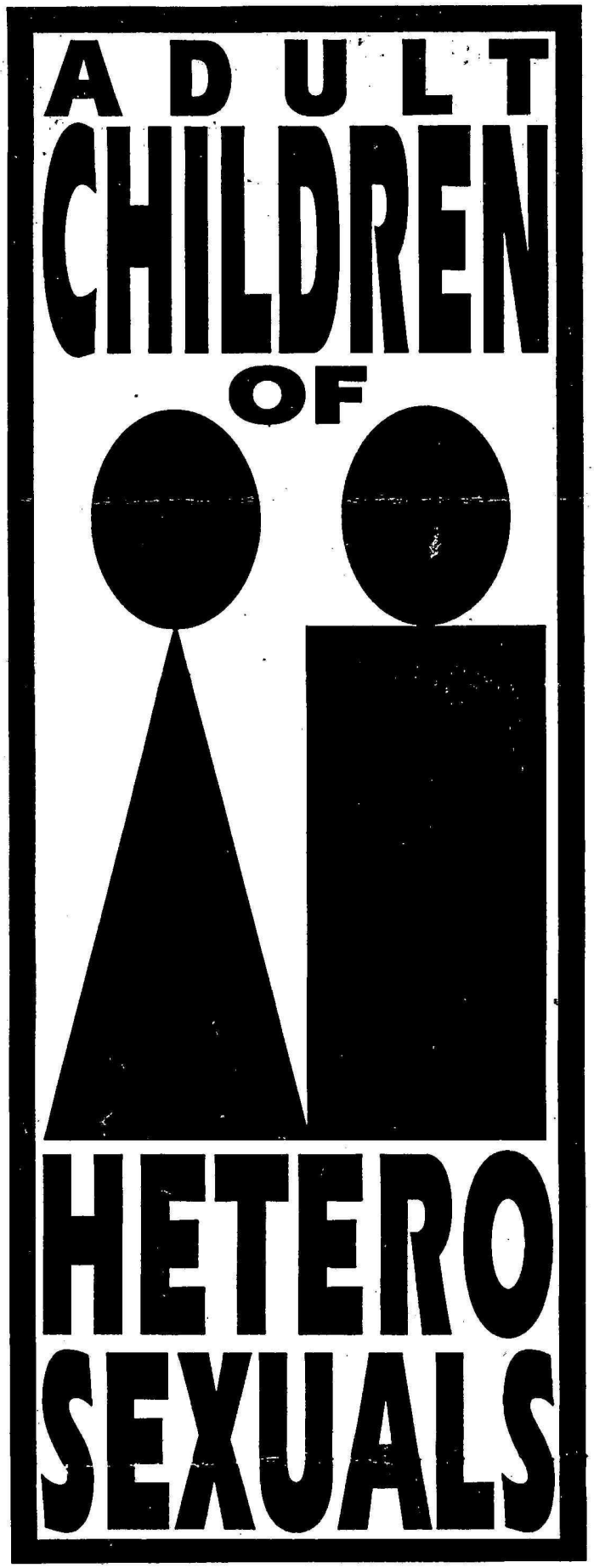
I've learned a lot about acceptance from bisexual women and think that the more women-loving-women we have in our midst, the more able we'll all be to just be who we are.

About computer bulletin board systems (or BBS')

BBS's are similar to conventional bulletin boards - people post messages and replies to those messages. There are dozens of local computer bulletin boards (or BBS's) in Seattle that can be called from a home computer with a modem (as this one was), in addition to world-wide networks such as Internet, which are supported by universities and companies with main-frame computers. Capabilities of BBS include live conversation and downloading of software. Like other BBS, 28 Barbary Lane has different "rooms" for different types of conversations (things to sell, special events, sports, news, ACT-UP, etc.). This conversation began in a room restricted to women only, and eventually the conversation spilled over into the bisexual room (the last message here is from the bisexual room).

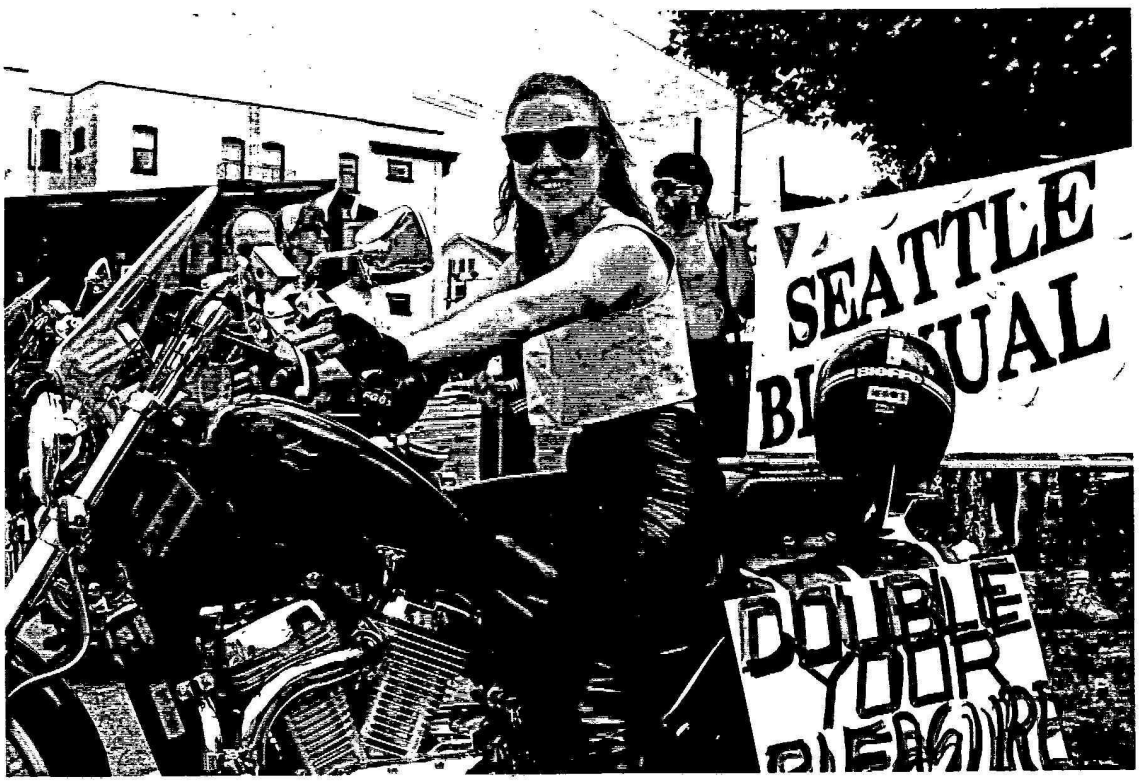
These comments were down loaded verbatim from 28 Barbary Lane with permission of the authors and the system operator. Names shown are the "user names", not the legal names of the authors. 28 Barbary Lane can be reached at 527-1964 (voice) or 525-2828 (modem).

Thanks to Lucy Gibson, our treasuresr (and treasure), for bringing this discussion to my attention, downloading it, and clearing with 28 Barbary Lane our use of the entires.



Huge bisexual contingent at the pride parade!

Starting off with the "banner sprint" (getting the banner to the middle of the parade from the beginning before our contingent started walking), the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network and Seattle Bisexual Men's Union marched together for the fifth consecutive year in Seattle's annual Gay Pride Parade and Freedom Day Rally June 30th. We started off with around 20 people, but as we walked along



our number swelled to over 50. Response from the crowd was incredibly enthusiastic, helped certainly by Leslie and friend as our twin motorcycle escorts. At the rally, ben factory of the Men's Union had arranged for a table for us, where we sold *Bi Any Other Name*, *North Bi Northwest* and extremely cool bisexual pride pins (pick them up at your next meeting).

Girls take over the world

Review ✍ by Kathleen Bennett

"Women's Music." When we think of it, we may consider a continuum including lesbian-only concerts and festivals and the recent crop of closeted or not-so-closeted dyke singer-songwriters signed to mainstream labels. Two bands also found on this continuum, *Two Nice Girls* and *Girls in the Nose*, spin out to include both more rock'n'roll and more bisexual content.

When I first encountered *Two Nice Girls* a few years back with their debut release, the photo of the clean-scrubbed long-haired Girls made me think that they were the kind of dykes we could take home to meet our mothers. They played creative, complex acoustic music with an original sensibility expressing woman-loving without being dogmatic or inauthentic. Their college radio hit, "I Spent My Last $10 On Birth Control and Beer" humorously showcased the narrator's unexpected lapse into heterosex. Since then, they've let their hair down even more (and cut it short).

Their new album, *Chloe Liked Olivia* (the title is taken from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*), overlaps their old territory with songs like the wonderful coming-of-age song, "Eleven." An unusual take on political commentary is provided by the uncomfortably graphic madrigal "For the Inauguration," which compares President Bush's rule to the worst aspects of heterosexual intercourse, questioning the need to settle for "a kinder and gentler fuck." The Girls' sense of humor shows even more now than before, their ensemble interaction has tightened up well, and they have greater self-confidence in illustrating unique and off-the-wall points of view. Most of all, they rock out — in the most delicious, politically incorrect way. The celebratory "Queer Song" overlays a classic bar-band "Not Fade Away" melody with the opening lines "I'm gonna tell you how it's gonna be/Soon you're gonna be fucking me." The censored video for "Let's Go Bonding" reportedly contained scenes of band members tonguing high-heeled shoes and Doc Marten boots, which were frowned on by MTV.

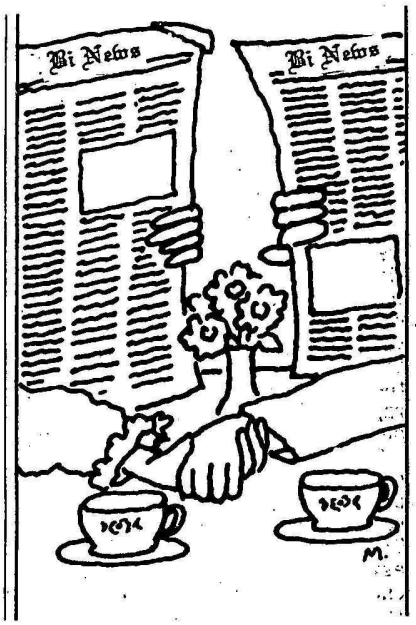
In concert earlier this month, the Girls performed "Man Love", ("our unreleased, soon-to-be hit"), based on another classic blues-rock melody and containing the lyrics "I love you, but I also love this man." Gretchen Phillips rapped in the middle about "defining my own correctness" and pointed out that she has written fifty million songs about women and only a couple about men. At the concert, they definitely focused on the rock side, performing the mellower selections earlier to pave the way for heavy dancing later. I was impressed at how much they respected the audience, generally giving out a lot of information about what was going on, and playing not one but two long sets. Politically correct or not, it was an energizing, fun experience. And, as my friend Annemarie quickly convinced me, Gretchen Phillips is a goddess.

Phillips and Pam Barger from *Two Nice Girls* also play with the lesser-known band *Girls In The Nose*. Their debut cassette-only release is subtitled "Document of a Subculture." The Girls in the Nose are even more rock-oriented and even more politically incorrect than the Two Nice Girls, but are not as successful at coming up with a creative and original musical sound. I prefer "alternative" musical styles to the straight-ahead guitar rock that the Nose girls perform, and wearied soon of leader Kay Turner's histrionic, high-reverb Grace Slick imitation. (They would make a great lesbian bar band, though.) The best song musically is their cover of *Sonic Youth*'s "Starpower" (I never could figure out if that was Kim Gordon or one of the male band members singing "she knows how to make love to me") in which the totally thrashed-out, overblown production style is completely appropriate.

It's worth buying the tape (through the Ladyslipper catalog, gay/women's bookstores, or alternative record stores) for the lyrics alone, however. I wish I could quote at length from "Where Girls Go," or "Bite Me," or "Menstrual Hut," because they speak for themselves. "Meat" contains a dialogue between Kay, who sings droolingly, lustfully, about the big chunks of meat sizzling on her barbecue, and Gretchen, who attempts to get her to eat tempeh and "talk about monogamy." The bi-highlight is "Honorary Heterosexual Lesbian," a sensual paean (with the refrain "oooh, aaah") to "a kind of sexuality/that pinks my whole mentality."

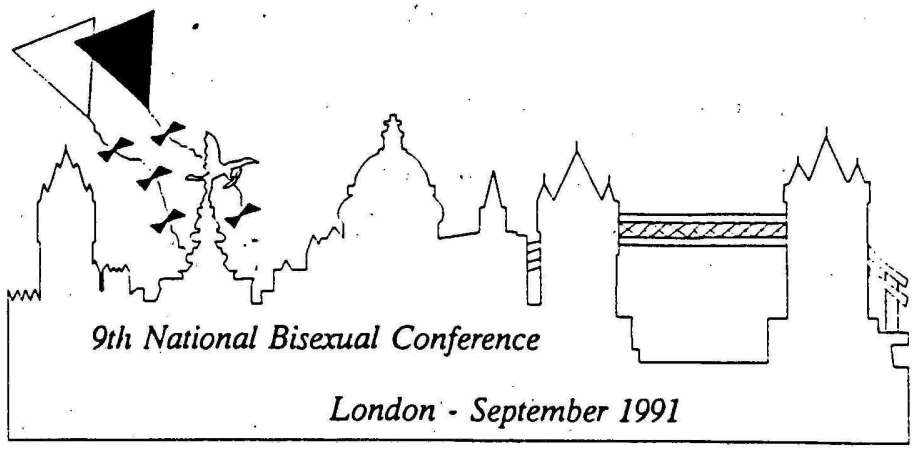
They're playing our song
They march right beside us
Cause there's nothing wrong with an
Honorary heterosexual lesbian
We're glad to have these women
by our side
Even for a little while
You come to our parties
You really act wild
The artful ambiguity of your smile

Hopefully, some of the "straight" performers in the public eye will loosen up just as much about sexuality as these two bands in the lesbian community have done. So let's have a little fun, and infiltrate a bisexual sensibility into women's music at the same time — there're enough Girls for all of us! ❧



The United Kingdom's 9th Bisexual Conference will be held in London on September 19-22nd. Papers on any aspects of bisexuality are being sought, everyone is welcome to submit their ideas. For more information about submitting papers or attending, contact:

Conference Collective
9th National Bisexual Conference
BM BI
London, WC1N 3XX
United Kingdom



After that comes the first-ever Global Bisexual Conference to be held in Amsterdam October 4-5. The Conference is being organized by Dr. Fritz Klein, author of *The Bisexual Option*, one of the first books on bisexuality, originally published in 1978 and recently re-issued. Could be a fine few weeks to spend in Europe this fall.

1st Internation Bisexual Conference
Postbus 1406
1000BK Amsterdam
The Netherlands
tel: (31-20) 627-7445
fax: (31-20) 548-7502

Seattle's Commission for Lesbians and Gays has sent us a notice that they're seeking candidates for appointment to the Commission to fill an unexpired term ending April 1992. The 15 member Commission serves as an advisory body to the Mayor and the City Council on issues of concern to lesbians and gay men (and presumably bisexuals) and works to ensure that the City fairly addresses the concerns of lesbians and gay men. Commission meetings are held the third Thursday of each month from 7-9pm, and the terms are for three years. We'd love to see a bisexual on the Commission. For more information, contact Nalani Askov at the Office for Women's Rights at 684-0390.

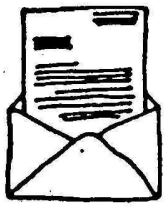
Ron Fox (who distributed the long questionnaire on bisexuality) has begun to correlate responses. The work is still in its early stages, but a few correlations of interest have popped up. He says his data shows that older people took longer to find their way to a bisexual identity, while for younger people the label is much more available. Also, 35% of people who responded have previously identified as lesbian or gay. Fox said this data is from the first 350 completed questionnaire he received, which is 60% of the total.

A bisexual woman at the University of Minnesota has charged verbal and physical harassment against a lesbian woman. Jage Miller, an openly bisexual woman claims that K.C. Wesley, a non-student, threatened to hit her after a University Lesbian (UL) meeting on March 12th. Kristi Adams, a member of UL, said that there had been problems between the two women because Wesley does not accept bisexuality. "It ended up in them getting into an argument and Wesley threatening Jage physically." The incident is now under review by the office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. From *Equal Times*, June 1991.

"We talk about gays, lesbians, and bisexuals as having a 'lifestyle'. We talk about heterosexuals as having a life." Felice Yeskel, director of the University of Massachusetts Program for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Concerns. Quoted in the *Smith Alumnae Quarterly*, Summer 1991.

The Seattle Municipal Elections Committee, a gay, lesbian, and now bisexual group which interviews local candidates on their stands on gay rights, voted in June to change its official name from Gay and Lesbian to Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual. Before each election the group distributes its findings on candidates to the gay press. ❧

Letters



Dear SBWN,

I am enclosing my renewal to *North Bi Northwest* because I have loved receiving your lively and thoughtful newsletter for the last two years.

I am disturbed to find so much writing by men in the last issue. I have appreciated *North Bi Northwest* because it gives me information, analysis, and news by and about feminist bisexual women. Ben Factory reports that Beth encouraged bi men to write for *North Bi Northwest.* Why?

In my life as a bi woman, I am in constant contact with men as well as women. I see a need for a variety of women-only activities, to allow women to enjoy each others' company, develop our skills and analysis, and work without having to deal with sexism. *North Bi Northwest* offers us a rare opportunity to communicate with each other about our unique experiences and concerns as bi women. I would be much happier if *North Bi Northwest* was primarily a bisexual women's newsletter.

N.A.

Beth replies: It's good to get feedback on what our readers want North Bi Northwest *to be. When we first started publishing almost five years ago, the idea was that we were to be a newsletter for the entire Northwest area, including news and articles from groups in British Columbia and Oregon as well. That would have made us de facto a mixed newsletter.*

But it turned out that the real interest and enthusiasm was from local women, and increasingly from women across the United States. SBWN is very much a feminist women's group, and we have strengthened our commitment to publishing feminist analysis of what it means to be a bisexual woman in each issue. I certainly see that as our mission. There really isn't any other forum devoted solely to that discussion that I'm aware of.

This last issue did include two articles by men, one news by ben, and one a pretty feminist look at what it is to be a bisexual man. I feel it's important to include male voices on occasion (about once a year seems appropriate). But don't worry, North Bi Northwest *will continue to be a women's newsletter with a strong feminist voice. In our soon-to-be five years of publication, we've published only three articles by men. We encourage all women to write for us.*

Help!

Considering relocating to Washington State. Please send information regarding your group, etc. Also, name and address of anyone dangerous enough to consider correspondence with another anal retentive East Coaster. Thanks,

Jael (Jennie) Mison Williams
1508 Bondridge Rd.
Wilmington, Delaware 19805

Dear SBWN,

My name is Angie Vincent. I'm 19 years old, and a year out of high school. I got your address from the May edition of *Private Lives.* And I just wanted to talk or hear from someone who knows that it's not easy being bisexual. I've been trying to deal with it for 2 years. I'm not ashamed of who or what I am. But it's hard sometimes. I feel like I'm the only one who's feeling this way. Sometimes the feelings are so right and other times I just want to be straight as they call themselves. I just thought that if I could write to your organization,that I could hear from people like myself. I think if I could I could handle it a lot better. Thank you.

Angie Vincent
62 Scott St.
Hornell, NY 14843

Editor's Letter

Each issue of this newsletter comes together through the effort and concentration of a great many women. Lucy and Peggy (welcome home!) sort the mail and pick out the items that might want to find there way into our columns, Lenore reads and edits the opinion pieces, Anita pours over the half-finished pages with her proofers-eyes. And of course I spent many enjoyable hours at Kinko's spent putting it all together.

But the first question, before we even begin the process, is the call to Lucy that starts out "So, do we have enough money to print the next issue?"

Currently we have 100 paid subscriptions. 100 more copies go out to bi groups, community groups and people we want to education about bisexuality (Ms. magazine, women's presses, college campus groups etc.). We also distribute about 200 copies locally in Seattle.

Those 100 subscriptions pay for about two thirds of our publishing costs. Another 50 subs only, and we'd be self-supporting. So if you pick up this newsletter at the meeting, or in a local bookstore, think about subscribing. We'd like to go into our fifth year in the black.

The upcoming topic for our October issues is "Bisexual relationships". So all of you who are in relationships where both partners are bisexual, tell us what's different, special, difficult or whatever about your relationship. Is it getting easier to find bi lovers, what with the burgoning bi movement?

December marks *North Bi Northwest's* fifth year. We'll be publishing reminiceses about both the newsletter and the group, and reprints of articles from years past. If you have any favorites you'd like to see again (or that you think others should see, if they came out when our circulations was smaller,) send in your suggestions.

And we're always looking for artists and graphic designers. I'd love a new design to start the second half of our first decade. Anyone interested?

-Beth

About the bisexual movement

This description of the history of the bisexual movement accompanied the BiNew press release.

Bisexual people have been activists and organizers in the lesbian-gay rights movement from the start. As that movement grew, matured, and solidified, bi people continued to nurture and support it, but still felt invisible, their sexuality unacknowledged and invalidated.So they began forming their own support, social, and political groups.

On October 11, 1987, at the March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights (attended by 500,000 people), bi individuals and groups marched as a national contingent for the first time. From that beginning, the network began coming together. Bi groups and communities throughout North America have grown ever since, with some group memberships numbering in the hundreds.

There are now at least 26 groups in England and Scotland, 11in the Netherlands, plus groups in Germany, New Zealand, Australia, and elsewhere; groups in 15 U.S. states and four Canadian provinces; and contact persons in Mexico.

Some of the groups publish sophisticated newsletters, and the Bay Area Bisexual network (one of 25 San Francisco area groups) publishes a well-circulated 64-page quarterly magazine of news, opinion and literature called *Anything That Moves*. The London Bisexual Group (one of several there) is currently preparing its second international book of personal stories by bisexual people, *More Bisexual Lives*.

Dr. Fritz Klein has released a revised edition of his well known work *The Bisexual Option*. Recent books include *Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out*, edited by Lani Kaahumanu of San Francisco and Loraine Hutchins of Washington D.C., and *Bisexuality: A Reader and Sourcebook* edited by Thomas Geller.

Upcoming anthologies include *The Bisexual Feminist: Essays on Feminist and Sexual Identity*, edited by Elizabeth Reba Weise of Seattle, and *Bisexual Politics*, edited by Naomi Tucker and Brad Robinson of San Francisco.

The first international bisexual conference is planned for October 5-6 in Amsterdam, two weeks after the Ninth British Bisexual Conference in London.

Bi Net

continued from page 1

clearinghouse for information about bisexuality; it facilitates communication among the many bi groups throughout the United States and supports local group development. While the network does not take political stands, such as endorsing candidates and legislation, it supports the liberation struggles of oppressed people, and promotes education about and awareness of bisexual people, groups, and communities, and promotes bi visibility.

Bi Net Contact people:

San Francisco:
Cianna Stewart
(415) 549-2238

Boston:
Laura Sachs (617) 965-5631
Robyn Ochs (617) 495-8476

Philadelphia:
Woody Cartwright
(215) 726-5525

Portland, Oregon:
Michael Ambrosino
(503) 232-2601

Reason's for travelling:

The wonderful hospitality and graciousness of bi groups across the country. These are some of the women of Santa Cruz, California's bi groups (of which there are over six). Special thanks to Celine Marie Pascale (first on the right on the bottom row) for arranging a wonderful brunch so that I could meet everyone.

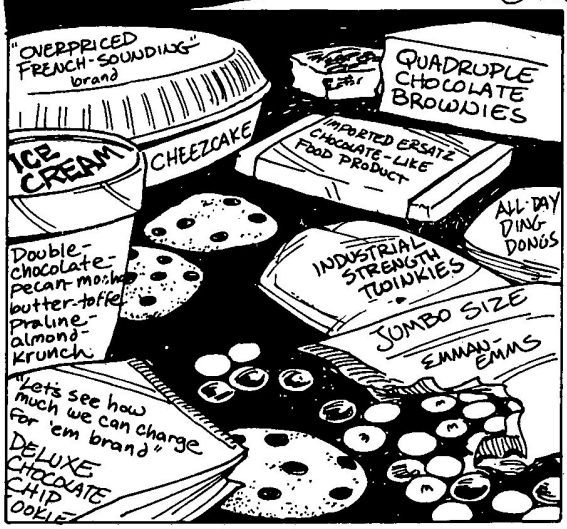
-Beth

WELL, ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST! Funny how you can NOW see that you saw it coming only after it finally came..? Well, who NEEDS the bastard/bitch? You deserve MUCH better! And, to help clear the path, we present the...

GUARANTEED GET-OVER-IT KIT

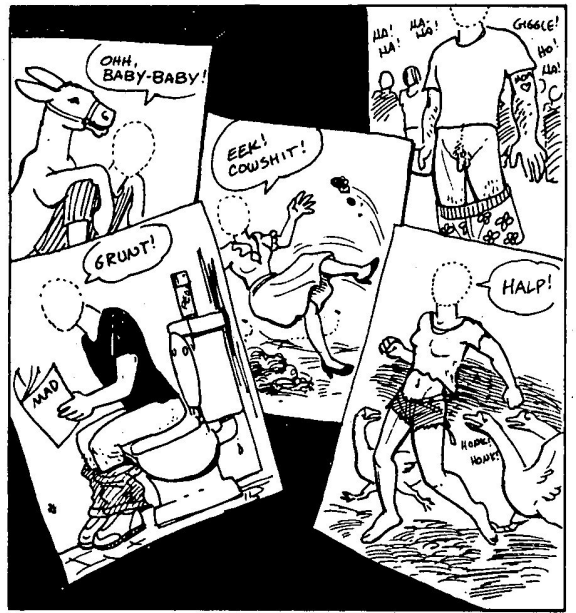
(NON GENDER-EXCLUSIVE)

© 1988 Roberta Gregory



One month's supply of your favorite "consolation chow" in scientifically-measured quantities to prevent actual weight gain. COMING SOON: Low/zero-calorie versions so you can REALLY pork out!

LOTS of photos of gals/guys MUCH better-looking (and nicer) than ol' "whats-her/his-name"... Geared towards what you're recovering from/have sworn off forever/are willing to consider NOW...



"Cut-up-old-photos-and-paste-on-their-face" pictures of people in silly, embarassing and humiliating situations. This one REALLY works, Folks!

Month's membership in the "get-it-off-your-chest" club. Special 800-number and Aunt Ethel's sympathetic ear for hours of blissful babbling. Lifetime package deal for those who seem to end up in the same sort of relationships time after time.

Most Americans positive about homosexuality

A new survey commissioned by the Human Rights Campaign Fund, America's largest gay-rights organization, has found that Americans overwhelmingly support equal rights for gays. Perhaps the most unexpected finding was that 81 percent of Americans oppose the military's policy of discharging all soldiers discovered to be lesbian or gay.

In addition, 65 percent oppose the Defense Department's ban on accepting gays and lesbian in the service in the first place.

A second major finding of the survey was that 80 percent of Americans believe "homosexuals should have equal rights for jobs." This is up from 56 percent in 1977 and 71 percent in 1989, when similar questions were asked by Gallup pollsters.

The poll, conducted by New York's Penn and Schoen Associated, questioned 800 randomly selected Americans, and has a margin error of 3.5 percent.

Reprinted from *Both Sides Now, Maui's Gay, Bi and Lesbian Organization newsletter.*

Bi women's hiking group forms in Seattle

Cathy, of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network has put together a hiking group for women in the group and other interested women. Dates for upcoming hikes are August 10, September 7 and September 21. There are over 10 women signed up for the hiking trips, and another five who want to organize camping trips. Contact Cathy through the Bi Phone, 783-7987.

The "Ten Necessary Essentials"

1) Extra clothing, more than needed in good weather
2) Extra food, enough so something is left over at the end of the trip.
3) Sunglasses
4) Knife
5) Firestarter, a candle fuel for starting a fire with wet wood.
6) First aid kit.
7) Matches, in waterproof container.
8) Flashlight, with extra batteries.
9) Map.
10) Compass.

Most queers monogamous, women more so

Gay and lesbian relationships may seem revolutionary by some standards, but most lesbian and gay couples organize their sex lives on the traditional principal of monogamy. In a national survey, 91 percent of female couples were found to be monogamous, as were 63 percent of male couples. The survey of 1,299 same-sex couples was conducted by *Partners Newsletter for Gay and Lesbian Couples.*

Of the female couples who were not monogamous, seven percent were "monogamous with agreed exceptions" and three percent were non-monogamous. Male couples were less inclined to monogamy: 26 percent permitted "agreed exceptions" and 11 percent were non-monogamous.

Most partners whose agreements allowed outside sex were sexually exclusive in practice. Outside sex was reported by less than three percent of female partners and 26 percent of male partners. Only 12 percent of all male partners had outside sex more often than monthly.

Men reporting outside sex also had more frequent sex with their partners. In addition, the longer the male couple had been together, the more likely they were to report outside sex. Neither of these patterns was observed among women.

Reprinted from *Partners: Newsletter for Gay and Lesbian Couples*, Box 9685, Seattle, WA 98109.

CALL FOR ESSAYS

ON THE POLITICS OF BISEXUALITY

Bisexual activists Naomi Tucker and Brad Robinson are seeking essays for an anthology to examine how our sexuality and our politics have converged to form who we are and how we look at the world. This book is the next logical step in a progression of recently published bisexual anthologies. We want to collect the voices of women and men who are creating and defining bisexual politics. We especially encourage those whose voices have been traditionally silenced or censored to submit writing that speaks to your personal experience. Submissions can be sent on disk (Macintosh or IBM compatible), or as double-spaced, typewritten manuscripts, by November 1, 1991, to:

BISEXUAL POLITICS
584 Castro Street #136
San Francisco, CA 94114

For more information, contact Brad Robinson at 415-826-5788 or Naomi Tucker 415-553-7725.

SUB SCRIBE

You'll Be Glad You Did

People who had relations with both sexes

Alexander the Great, ruler
Saint Augustine, theologian
Josephine Baker, entertainer
Tallulah Bankhead, actress
Djuna Barnes, novelist
David Bowie, musician
Brythen, poet
Lord Byron, poet
Caligula, tyrant
Julius Ceaser, ruler
John Cheever, writer
Colette, novelist
Katharine Cornell, actress
Countee Cullen, poet
James Dean, actor
Sanuel Delany, novelist
Emily Dickinsom, poet
Havelock Ellis, early sexologist
Errol Flynn, actor
Margaret Fuller, early feminist
Judy Garland, actress
Paul Goodman, writer
Lorraine Hansberry, playwright
Langston Hughes, poet
Elton John, rock star
Janis Joplin, rock star
John Maynard Keyes, economist
Billie Jean King, athlete
Katherine Mansfield, writer
W. Somerset Maugham, novelist
Carson McCullers, novelist
Rod McKuen, poet
Kate Millett, writer and activist
Yukio Mishima, writer
Marina Navratilova, athelete
Holly Near, singer
Vaslav Nijinsky, dancer
Anais Nin, writer
Georgia O'Keeffe, painter
Phillip of Macedon, king
Gretchen Phillips, singer
Tyrone Power, actor
Pu Yi, emperor
Ma Rainey, singer
Vita Sackville-West, writer
Marquis de Sade, sadist
Peter Tchaikovsky, composer
Sara Teasdale, poet
Dorothy Thompson, journalist
Rudolph Valentine, actor
Carl van Vechten, photographer
Paul Verlaine, poet
Voltaire, writer
Oscar Wilde, playwright
Mary Wollstonecraft, writer
Virginia Woolf, writer